

District Attorney Marc Bennett
18th Judicial District of Kansas



www.sedgwickcounty.org/da <https://www.facebook.com/SedgwickCountyDistrictAttorney>

For Immediate Release, 1/26/22

WICHITA, KAN. – On Monday Nov. 1, 2021, the Catholic Diocese of Wichita announced that Bishop Carl Kemme was placing a priest on administrative leave following a report made to the diocese by a reporting party on behalf of an alleged victim. The diocese identified the priest as Rev. Michael Schemm.

Prior to placing Rev. Schemm on leave, the diocese forwarded the allegations to the Office of the District Attorney. The Office of the District Attorney in turn forwarded the matter for investigation to the Exploited and Missing Child Unit (EMCU).

The allegations were reported to have occurred when Rev. Schemm was serving at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Wichita between 1993 and 1996. At that time, the reported victim would have been between 12 and 15 years of age. The reported victim would now be 40 years of age. The diocese confirmed that Rev. Schemm was appointed to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton between June of 1993 and July of 1996.

The diocese also provided Rev. Schemm's subsequent employment history. After leaving St. Elizabeth's, he has been continually employed in parishes in the state, while living in Kansas.

In 1994, the Kansas legislature amended the five year statute of limitations set forth in K.S.A. 21-3106 (the statute prior to 2011 when it was changed to K.S.A. 21-5107) to allow the statute to be "tolled" (not counted) if certain factors existed in certain crimes where the victim was under the age of 15. However, the legislative change made clear that "in no event" could a crime be charged after the victim turned "28 years of age." These changes went into effect July 1, 1994. Other exceptions to the 5 year statute of limitations in Kansas in 1994 included any period of time when the suspect was voluntarily absent from the state of Kansas.

The reporting party in this situation reported the incident to the diocese on behalf of the alleged victim. The behavior alleged by the reporting party did not involve any allegation of physical touching.

The 1995 version of K.S.A. 21-3516 Sexual Exploitation of a Child, included in the definition of the crime, "inducing," or "coercing" a child under 16 to engage in . . . "exhibition in the nude." The statute of limitations on this crime would have expired not later than 2001. Because of the age of the alleged victim, any exceptions to the statute

of limitations would have expired when the victim turned 28, in 2009. Again, because Rev. Shemm has resided continually in Kansas, the statute of limitations would not have "tolled" under that exception to the statute.

Given the passage of time and by operation of the statute of limitations, the prosecution of any alleged crime in this situation would be time-barred. This is a legal conclusion only. No commentary or conclusions are offered as to the relative merit of the allegations.

District Attorney Marc Bennett
18th Judicial District of Kansas

CONTACT: DAN DILLON, MEDIA COORDINATOR 316-660-3707

Dan.Dillon@SEDGWICK.GOV